

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 1162

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By Mr. Rodrigues of Westport (by request), petition of Michael J. Rodrigues and others relative to the healthcare workforce. Health Care Financing.

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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### PETITION OF:

Michael J. Rodrigues	Antonio F. D. Cabral
Don Gillis	Thomas M. McGee
Robert M. Koczera	John F. Quinn
Daniel E. Bosley	Christopher N. Speranzo
Susan C. Tucker	Richard T. Moore
John D. Keenan	Peter J. Koutoujian
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In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

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### AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1    Whereas, it being determined that there is a public health and  
2    safety crisis in Massachusetts as a result of large and persistent  
3    worker shortages at all levels and in all occupations in the healthcare  
4    sector, the Commonwealth must establish a set of strategic interven-  
5    tions to solve current worker shortages and to prevent such shortages  
6    in the future. Worker shortages and high worker turnover have been  
7    identified as a main cause of inadequate or inconsistent patient care,  
8    healthcare disparities, emergency room diversions, deferred or  
9    denied testing and treatment, increased medical errors, and increased  
10   costs. A multi-stakeholder council, representing all sub sectors of the  
11   healthcare industry, labor and professional organizations, workforce  
12   investment boards, education and workforce development, health-  
13   care advocates, the Governor and the legislature will be established  
14   to develop and oversee the success of a state-wide strategic action

15 plan with measurable outcomes that utilizes existing and supplemen-  
16 tary state and federal funds

17 Chapter 23 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the  
18 following section:—

19 Section X.

20 (a) There shall be in the executive office of labor and workforce  
21 development, but not subject to the jurisdiction thereof, a healthcare  
22 workforce council, hereinafter called the council. The council shall  
23 review existing data regarding the current state of the healthcare  
24 workforce and establish a set of evidence-based priorities and spe-  
25 cific performance measures for Massachusetts' education, higher  
26 education, and workforce development systems that will serve as  
27 indicators of success in solving the healthcare worker shortages; and  
28 will work with representatives from those systems to develop pro-  
29 grammatic strategies to meet specific measurement standards over a  
30 four-year period. The council will oversee tracking, evaluating, and  
31 recommendations for improving strategies over the course of a four-  
32 year period; and will advocate for necessary policy and resource  
33 deployment changes required to implement recommendations. The  
34 council will seek to address the most critical problems hindering the  
35 growth and improvement of the Massachusetts healthcare workforce.  
36 These will include, but are not limited to reducing the incidence of  
37 persistent job vacancies to below two percent; expanding the  
38 capacity of the Commonwealth's public and private nursing educa-  
39 tion system, with particular emphasis on increasing the number of  
40 qualified nursing faculty; improving the quality of nursing through  
41 improved nursing education and professional development opportu-  
42 nities; ensuring effective, performance-based coordination across  
43 funding and service streams; responding to regional differences in  
44 healthcare needs and workforce demographics, with particular  
45 emphasis on medically underserved areas or areas experiencing sig-  
46 nificant healthcare disparities; increasing ethnic and racial diversity  
47 in the workforce; modernizing curricula and student laboratories to  
48 better prepare the healthcare workforce to perform effectively in a  
49 rapidly changing technological environment; providing upgrade  
50 training and professional development to ensure that Massachusetts  
51 retains its world class status in the healthcare and biosciences indus-  
52 tries; developing regional strategies in partnership with workforce  
53 investment boards, including career ladders and apprenticeships, that

54 support entry-level and paraprofessional healthcare workers to  
55 progress to professional licensed positions and better wages; encour-  
56 aging middle and high school students to explore careers in the  
57 health care industry and prepare students for post-secondary educa-  
58 tion and jobs in health care; creating bridge programs at all of the  
59 state's community colleges to increase basic skills and prepare  
60 incumbent workers for career advancement in the health care  
61 industry; and standardize entrance requirements, curriculum and  
62 graduation standards across two and four year nursing and allied  
63 health education programs.

64 (b) The council shall oversee the development of a systematic  
65 approach to collecting, integrating, and disseminating data on cur-  
66 rent and future healthcare workforce issues. The council will report  
67 regularly on demand for particular healthcare workers by occupation  
68 and region; the current status of the healthcare labor force; enroll-  
69 ments and graduation data from healthcare occupation education  
70 programs; changing workplace needs, including technological  
71 changes and their impact on worker skill needs; workplace diversity  
72 and the effectiveness of current approaches to addressing healthcare  
73 skill shortages. Commonwealth Corporation shall serve as the coor-  
74 dinator of healthcare workforce data and research resources cur-  
75 rently available and will work with the council and others to identify  
76 and prioritize research gaps that must be addressed in order to pre-  
77 vent future critical workforce shortages. Existing data that will con-  
78 tribute to this effort include, but are not limited to those within the  
79 Divisions of Unemployment Assistance and Career Services, the  
80 Division of Professional Licensure; the Department of Public  
81 Health, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the National  
82 Center for Education Statistics, and other sources such as the U.S.  
83 Census Bureau, the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administra-  
84 tion, the Massachusetts Center for Nursing and surveys by work-  
85 force investment boards, industry associations and state and national  
86 professional organizations. Commonwealth Corporation will admin-  
87 ister a fund pool to support expanded research efforts, such as  
88 enhancing the DUA/DCS Job Vacancy Survey to include a larger  
89 number of healthcare employers, gathering workforce data through  
90 the Bureau of Professional Licensure, and other research initiatives  
91 determined to be of consequence by the council.

92       (c) The council shall appoint subcommittees as it deems necessary to develop a funding coordination strategy and to identify 93 service gaps or barriers to progress for individuals enrolled in or 94 applying to enroll in healthcare occupation education programs. The 95 council shall examine the full breadth of the healthcare worker 96 pipeline, and prioritize the use of resources to address the most sig- 97 nificant or critical shortages. The council must establish an action 98 plan that utilizes existing state and federal funding resources, and 99 where possible leverages employer or other private resources, and 100 that defines a timeline, projected milestones and demonstrable suc- 101 cess indicators. The council will identify statutory and regulatory 102 impediments to progress; to alert the Governor and legislature about 103 needed changes and to offer clearly articulated recommendations for 104 new policies whenever warranted.

105     (d) The council shall identify pilot initiatives each year that will 106 facilitate new approaches to strategic collaboration between and 107 among systems and programs, encourage completion of education 108 programs, diversity and retention on the job of underserved popula- 109 tions, test potential policy recommendations, and leverage the sus- 110 tained involvement of healthcare employer partners and local 111 workforce investment boards in strengthening the healthcare worker 112 pipeline. These pilot initiatives shall be of sufficient length to pro- 113 vide measurable results. The Council shall, subject to appropriation, 114 utilize funds from the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, estab- 115 lished per Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006, Section 31, Section 116 2WWW and the Workforce Training Fund Section 2RR to develop 117 and support, pilot initiatives that increase the number of Massachu- 118 sets public higher education faculty and students who participate in 119 programs that support careers in fields related to nursing and allied 120 health. The Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development may 121 expend monies from these funds on activities that are calculated to 122 increase the number of qualified nursing and allied health faculty 123 and students in the Commonwealth and improve the nursing and 124 allied health educational offerings available in public higher educa- 125 tion institutions. Grants and other disbursements and activities may 126 involve, without limitation, the University of Massachusetts, state 127 and community colleges, business and industry partnerships, 128 regional alliances, workforce investment boards, 501(c)(3) organiza- 129 tions and other community groups which promote the nursing pro-

131 fession. Grants and other disbursements and activities may support,  
132 without limitation:—

133 (i) the goal of rapidly increasing the number of nurses and allied  
134 health workers

135 (ii) enhancing the role of the system of public higher education, as  
136 institutions and in partnerships with other stakeholders, in meeting  
137 the short and long-term workforce challenges in the nursing and  
138 allied health professions and;

139 (iii) the development and use of innovative curricula, courses,  
140 programs and modes of delivering education in nursing and allied  
141 health professions for faculty and students in these fields and;

142 (iv) activities with the growing network of stakeholders in the  
143 nursing and allied health professions to create, implement, share and  
144 make broadly and publicly available best practices and innovative  
145 programs relative to instruction, development of partnerships and  
146 expanding and maintaining faculty and student involvement in  
147 careers in these fields; and

148 (v) strengthening the institutional capacity to develop and imple-  
149 ment long-term programs and policies to respond effectively to these  
150 challenges. The council will oversee a discretionary fund pool that  
151 supports pilot initiatives. The fund pool will be administered by  
152 Commonwealth Corporation under the direction of the council.

153 (e) The council shall consist of:— 2 members of the senate:— the  
154 chair of the committee on labor and workforce development and the  
155 chair of the committee on health care financing or committee on  
156 public health 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair appointed by the  
157 senate president; 2 members of the house of representatives:— the  
158 chair of the committee on labor and workforce development and the  
159 chair of the committee on health care financing or committee on  
160 public health, 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair appointed by the  
161 speaker of the house; the Secretary of the department of workforce  
162 development; the chancellor of the board of higher education; the  
163 secretary of the executive office of health and human services; the  
164 secretary of elder affairs; the commissioner of the department of  
165 education; the president of Commonwealth corporation; the presi-  
166 dent of the university of Massachusetts; the commissioner of the  
167 department of public health; the director of the division of healthcare  
168 finance and policy; 12 members to be selected by the following  
169 organizations, 1 of whom shall be from of the Massachusetts AFL-

170 CIO, 1 of whom shall be from SEIU 1199, 1 of whom shall be from  
171 the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association, 1 of whom shall be  
172 from the executive office of community colleges, 1 of whom shall be  
173 from the Massachusetts Hospital Association, 1 of whom shall be  
174 from the Massachusetts extended care federation, 1 of whom shall  
175 be from the home care alliance of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall be  
176 from the Massachusetts league of community health centers, 1 of  
177 whom shall be from the Massachusetts Center for Nursing, 1 of  
178 whom shall be from the Massachusetts Nurses Association, 1 of  
179 whom shall be from the Massachusetts Medical Society, 1 of whom  
180 shall be from the Massachusetts Area Health Education Center Net-  
181 work, 1 of whom shall be from Massachusetts Association of Col-  
182 leges of Nursing; and an additional three health care employers to be  
183 appointed by the governor.

184 (f) Members of the council shall serve without compensation. The  
185 council shall annually, on or before December 31, file a report with  
186 the clerk of the house of representatives and the clerk of the senate,  
187 the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint com-  
188 mittee on labor and workforce development, the joint committee on  
189 public health, the joint committee on health care financing and the  
190 joint committee on higher education. The report shall include, but  
191 not be limited to, an updated status of the healthcare workforce and  
192 healthcare education programs, projections based on the research  
193 initiatives of the council, and recommendations for improvements  
194 thereof.

195 (g) The department of workforce development shall provide the  
196 funds necessary to carry out the activities of this section through  
197 workforce investment act funds. The department may use up to  
198 \$300,000 of the workforce competitiveness trust fund for this pur-  
199 pose and shall provide administrative support to the council, as  
200 requested.